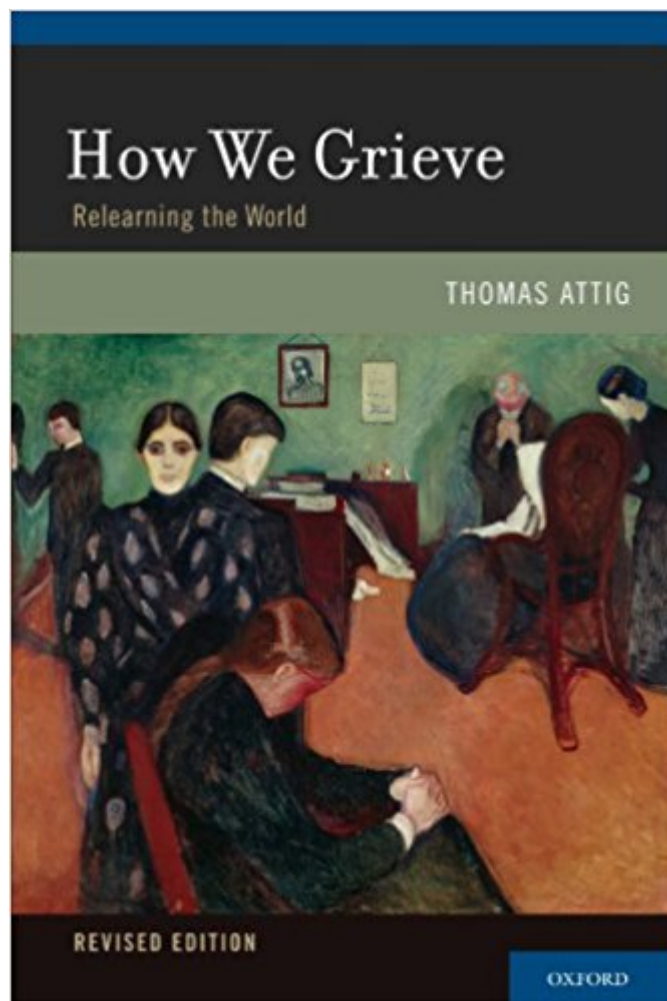


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# How We Grieve: Relearning The World



## Synopsis

If we wish to understand loss experiences we must learn details of survivors' stories. The new version of *How We Grieve: Relearning the World* tells in-depth tales of survival to illustrate the poignant disruption of life and suffering that loss entails. It shows how through grieving we overcome challenges, make choices, and reshape our lives. These intimate treatments of coping with loss address the needs of grieving people and those who hope to support and comfort them. The accounts promote understanding of grieving itself, encourage respect for individuality and the uniqueness of loss experiences, show how to deal with helplessness in the face of "choiceless" events, and offer guidance for caregivers. The stories make it clear that grieving is not about living passively through stages or phases. We are not so alike when we grieve; our experiences are complex and richly textured. Nor is grieving about coming down with "grief symptoms". No one can treat us to make things better. No one can grieve for us. Grieving is instead an active process of coping and relearning how to be and how to act in a world where loss transforms our lives. Loss forces us to relearn things and places; relationships with others, including fellow survivors, the deceased, even God; and our selves, our daily life patterns, and the meanings of our life stories. This revision adds an introductory essay about developments in the author's thinking about grieving as "relearning the world." It highlights and clarifies its most distinctive and still salient themes. It elaborates on how his thinking about these themes has expanded and deepened since the first edition. And it places his treatment of those themes in the broader context of current writings on grief and loss.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"If one is looking for a book on grief and grieving based on lived experiences rather than more remote psychosocial theories, then Thomas Attig's *How We Grieve* is the resource to read. Although it is not a brand new book (first published in 1996), in this reviewer's opinion no book published in the last four years comes close to the power of Attig's contribution to understanding the grief process. Attig, a former philosophy professor and past president of the Association for Death Education and Counseling, uses the power of story to unlock the mystery of the human experience of life and death, and produces a rich treasure of intensely human stories of coping with loss due to death. This book has substance, theory and organization, and is highly readable--packed with the everyday drama of life and death. It is an immensely useful and provocative, sensitive and human, inspiring and engaging book."--America "In this richly rewarding book, Attig, a philosopher who has written and taught extensively about death, bereavement, grief, and grieving, presents his reflections on the grieving process. . . . The author writes in a graceful prose style that is often powerfully metaphorical, but that is nevertheless clear and straightforward. Insightful and enlightening. Highly recommended."--Choice "Attig, through the use of vignettes, takes the reader along on a number of pilgrimages toward resolution; journeys whose starting points may appear to be the same but are, in fact, dissimilar. The need of the person in grief to relearn her/his world (grief resolution) is discussed along with the importance of understanding how this pilgrimage to resolution significantly changes the traveler as well as the way future journeys will be experienced. This book is a must read for anyone who is involved in providing support for individuals in grief."--David K. Meagher, Editor, *The Thanatology Newsletter* "How We Grieve is a valuable resource in death education courses and workshops, as well as for those who want one good book on death and dying....(It may become a valued handbook for caregivers in hospice, hospitals, and nursing homes." --*Death Studies* "Attig has written a groundbreaking book, one that may prove to be a cornerstone in a revised theory of grief and its place in human life....I would recommend it to all those who have suffered a loss, as well as those therapists and counselors who attempt to help them." --Robert A. Neimeyer, President, Association for Death Education and Counseling "[Attig] rejects the grief stages and phases offered by Kubler-Ross, Engels, Lindemann, Bowlby, and the medical profession as static and too automatic. Instead he considers grief to be an individualized process. . . [that] should help the survivor make the transition from loving someone in the present to 'loving them in their absence.' This book should prove useful for counselors, survivors, and

caregivers alike."--Readings "Attig's How We Grieve: Relearning the World . . . is written in the 'inspirational we' model, with an emphasis on stories as the vehicle for illustrating psychological messages. Attig directly challenges the imagery of 'tasks' and 'stages,' the former associated with J. William Worden's theories . . . Unfortunately, it is difficult to write an 'inspirational' book when the message is that 'mourning never ends' and that, although people will eventually feel better, relearn the world, and form new relationships, this process does not leave them in a state of 'light, warmth, and peace.' On the other hand, Attig insists that an 'active' stance--grieving understood as something we do rather than a fate that befalls us--is a key to enduring it."--Religious Studies Review "Based on a lifetime of experience in the field of death education and counseling, the author moves far beyond the roots laid down in his first book to introduce new ideas and perceptions on how people grieve. He adds a profoundly human element to the dialog and writes in an engaging style, which both scholars and lay people will find approachable. I highly recommend this revised edition as the go-to book for those interested in gaining a better understanding of the complexity of thought and emotion inherent in how we grieve." --Doody's "The reader-friendly How We Grieve is an enlightening and a thoughtful text on a sensitive topic. I strongly recommend this book to bereaved persons and to their caregivers, including health care professionals and the general public." --Journal of the American Medical Association "This book examines philosophical and practical aspects of grieving based on lived experiences and examples. Deep feelings and ethical aspects are extensively analyzed reflecting the most sensitivity and affectionate care of the Author for the most difficult moments of life for all of us." -- Anticancer Research

In How we Grieve, Thomas Attig tells real-life tales to illustrate the poignant disruption of life and suffering that loss entails. He shows how through grieving we meet daunting challenges, make critical choices, and reshape our lives. --This text refers to the CD-ROM edition.

Found this book extremely helpful. Thank you.

Book Came As Described. Nicely Priced. Arrived As Expected.

great condition! Thank you!

TO GRIEVE IS TO RELEARN THE WORLD. The relatives, lovers, and friends of those who die face inevitable bereavement. For many, however, the grieving that follows death is poorly

understood, and hence, poorly handled. \*\*\* Thomas Attig's recent book, *How We Grieve: Relearning the World* (Oxford University Press, 1996), offers a powerful conceptualization of bereavement and grief, and thus offers immediate help to those who may have come across only the facile generalizations of some of the "death and dying" popularizers, such as Elisabeth Kubler-Ross. \*\*\* Thomas Attig is President of the Association for Death Education and Counseling. In a series of six intertwined essays, each with a slightly different emphasis, he develops his central metaphor: "relearning the world." Attig argues that bereavement is a "choiceless event

Is grief an illness? Are there stages of grief? Does time heal all wounds? For Thomas Attig, the answer to all of these questions is NO! Grief is a process by which one relearns his/her world, a world that has been permanently altered by the death(s) of significant persons in one's life. Using the stories of eleven persons, Attig demonstrates the active nature of grieving. For Attig, the stories are the heart of the matter. The reader is introduced into the stories at the point of the loss experiences. Attig takes us through their coping behaviors as he develops the model of relearning the world; including relearning our selves and our relationships with the deceased. *How We Grieve* is a very special book. It does not simply restate the stages and phases of grief so frequently outlined in like texts. Attig presents a different and important perspective to the understanding of how one copes with the death of a loved one and why grief occurs. Although Attig's book may be perceived as a resource for the professional caregiver, it can motivate all of us to examine the nature of our own relationships and assess our own coping styles and support systems.

What a find this book is! How often we say, when somebody has died, "If there is anything I can do..." We're sincere, but usually, after we've prepared a casserole, we feel so helpless to do anything more. Then I discovered "*How We Grieve: Relearning the World*." Since then I've been giving it to bereaved friends. They take comfort that others have shared their experiences. They learn the ways that others have begun putting their lives back together. Several have conveyed to me what reading "*How We Grieve*" has meant to them. It gave them a sense of being understood and it provided many useful clues to understanding themselves and discovering how to reengage in the joys and burdens life brings. So, in truth, I no longer say, "If there is anything I can do." Instead, perhaps three months after the funeral, I write a heart-felt inscription in a copy of "*How We Grieve*" and send it to my friend. I commend the practice for the solace and healing it has provided.

Grief is a topic that has been explored only in recent years, with Kubler-Ross getting it all started.

Attig brings this topic a step further in discussing not only how we grieve, but in suggesting that in doing so, we must relearn the world. We have lost a loved one and our world has been vastly changed in just a few quick moments. We need to cope, to allow ourselves to grieve, and ultimately to create or "relearn" a world that can never be the same. The wonderful case studies Attig presents are the most helpful in helping the grieving reader to do this important life task. They tell real stories of real people that we can identify with and relate to. They evoke emotional responses that help us grow and believe we too can relearn our world in the face of grieving. I heartily recommend this book to anyone who is grieving the loss of a beloved relative or friend, or to those who wish to prepare themselves in advance for the inevitable.

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